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SUBJECT: POLAND READY TO EXPAND THE CHORUS ON IRAN

REF: STATE 95073

Classified By: Political Counselor F. Daniel Sainz for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The GoP fully agrees with reftel views and believes that Iranian authorities are running out of time to engage in a substantive, comprehensive dialogue with the West. MFA Iran desk officer Piotr Kozlowski told us Poland would do what it could to persuade Iran to be more forthcoming regarding its nuclear intentions; the Poles would push through their embassy in Tehran and at the UNGA, as well as through the EU. Warsaw will also continue to encourage the EU to coordinate its policy closely with the U.S. and the P5 1 because, in the GoP's view, Tehran would exploit a lack of Western unity.

¶2. (C) However, Kozlowski said the GoP was not optimistic that Iran would respond positively to Western overtures. The Iranian Government had tightened its control since the June presidential elections. According to the Polish Embassy's reporting from Tehran, moderate political activists, who previously had a voice, however minimal, in influencing policy from the inside, were no longer capable of influencing ascendant hard-liners. In the meantime, Iran would continue to rely on Russia's support -- and Security Council veto -- to prevent the imposition of tougher sanctions.

¶3. (C) Kozlowski went on to suggest that Tehran's reliance on Moscow also opened up possibilities that the West, especially the EU, should exploit. In his view, Iran currently looked to Russia as its chief protector, but both countries were also potential competitors in selling energy products to Europe in the future. Kozlowski suggested that the EU should step up efforts to persuade Iran to be more transparent about its nuclear program, including adhering to international resolutions and IAEA safeguards, in exchange for greater access to the European market for its energy products. He acknowledged that previous enticements had not been successful, but the current state of the Iranian economy, along with generally higher energy prices, might induce Tehran to reconsider. As an added benefit, Kozlowski wryly noted, Europe could reduce its energy dependence on Russia.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Poland is particularly eager to see universal application of sanctions. State-owned gas importer PGNiG was exploring possibilities to invest in Iranian gas fields in mid-2008 when sharp criticism from the U.S. resulted in the State Treasury ordering PGNiG to pull back from any potential investments or commercial deals with Iran. GoP officials were supportive of our sanctions regime but were sensitive to U.S.-led sanctions closing this potential

avenue of energy diversification. GoP officials also noted with regret that Poland would be disadvantaged if other countries were allowed to invest in Iran, and voiced concerns that more agile U.S. firms would beat back Polish investors once sanctions were lifted.

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